

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. This amendment is being filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE).

The RCE will cause the entry of claim amendments presented in a November 29, 2006 Response After Final Office Action and a December 6, 2006 Supplemental Response After Final Office Action. Accordingly, the amendments presented above are based on the claims as pending after entry of these two prior responses.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-16, 19 and 23 are pending. Claims 20-22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 17-18 were canceled in a previous Amendment. Claim 1 has been amended, and now recites a feature of canceled dependent claim 20. Claim 9 has been amended to place the claim in better idiomatic English without narrowing the scope of the subject matter recited therein, and was not made for reasons of patentability. No new matter is added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of claims 3-5 and 11-13.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-2, 6-10, 14-16 and 19-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,300,931 to Someya et al. ("Someya"). Claim 20 has been canceled, thus rendering the rejection moot with respect to claim 20.

CONCLUSION

Each and every point raised in the Office Action dated September 6, 2006 has been addressed on the basis of the above amendments and remarks. In view of the foregoing it is believed that claims 1-16, 19 and 23 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

By

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